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TSPL, EINV, MK  
SUBJECT: MACEDONIA'S DIASPORA GROUPS

REF: SECSTATE 86401

This cable is responsive to the request for information in  
SecState 86401.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Diaspora groups from Macedonia, most active in the U.S., Canada, and Australia, are divided along the ethnic lines of the country,s two largest groups-- ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians. The ethnic separation of diaspora interests -- coupled with use of the term "Macedonian" by diaspora groups with links to and interests in Greece (representing starkly different interests from diaspora groups of the Republic of Macedonia) -- blurs the picture of the Macedonian diaspora. As a result, there is not a single diaspora linked directly back to the modern borders and full ethnic diversity of the Republic of Macedonia. Typically more rigid than mainstream political elements within Macedonia on issues of identity and ethnicity, ethnic Macedonian diaspora groups tend to focus on history, identity, and the name issue. Ethnic Albanian diaspora groups are pan-regional, focused on issues of interest to ethnic Albanians throughout the Balkans and the world, and not narrowly on the interests of the ethnic Albanian minority in Macedonia. Ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian diaspora groups, both with some links to the political leadership of Macedonia, so far have not worked together on issues of importance for the whole of the country, but have expressed some willingness to do so, with encouragement from the Embassy. One group new to the mix, Macedonia 2025, may help change the discourse of diaspora groups by focusing on economic development in Macedonia, rather than issues of history or identity. End Summary.

#### Ethnic Macedonian Groups

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¶2. (SBU) The United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD), founded in 2004, is headquartered in Washington, D.C. UMD,s stated main goal is fostering unity among ethnic Macedonian people and advancing their interests, such as recognition of Macedonia,s constitutional name, its language, identity and history. UMD claims to have representatives serving Macedonian communities around the world, including Brussels, Canberra, London, Melbourne, New York, Paris, Stuttgart, Sydney and Toronto. Website: [www.umdiaspora.org](http://www.umdiaspora.org).

¶3. (SBU) The Macedonian-American Friendship Association, based in Columbus, Ohio, "is dedicated to preserving the peace in the Republic of Macedonia by compiling and disseminating information about the situation in the Republic of Macedonia to the Government, Congressional representatives and media," according to its website. As is the case for the UMD, the issues on which the organization focuses and disseminates information are largely those of history and identity. Website:

¶4. (SBU) The Macedonian Alliance, founded in 1991, is headquartered in Melbourne, Australia, also is focused on ethnic Macedonian issues. In particular, its website focuses on funding and support to families of ethnic Macedonians -- "Fallen Heroes" --who died in the 2001 civil conflict. Website: [www.macedonianalliance.com](http://www.macedonianalliance.com)

¶5. (SBU) The Macedonian Patriotic Organization, headquartered in Fort Wayne, Indiana, claims to have 16 local chapters around the U.S. and Canada. Its primary focus is the history/identity of ethnic Macedonians and the name dispute. Website: [www.macedonian.org](http://www.macedonian.org). Other organizations are also active in New Jersey and Florida.

#### Ethnic Albanian Groups

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¶6. (SBU) The National Albanian American Council, headquartered in Washington D.C. is, "dedicated to advocating for Albanians and promoting peace and economic development in the Balkans." NAAC representatives make regular visits to the region and frequently schedule meetings with Macedonian political leaders and senior diplomats within Macedonia's international community. The NAAC's primary goals in Macedonia are to encourage political dialogue and promote foreign investment in the ethnically Albanian regions of the country. Website: [www.naac.org](http://www.naac.org).

¶7. (SBU) The Albanian American Civic League, headquartered in New York and run by former Congressman Joe Dioguardi occasionally visits Macedonia, but focuses most of its efforts on Kosovo and is less active in Macedonia than the NAAC. Website: [www.aacl.com](http://www.aacl.com)

#### Economy

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¶8. (SBU) While most ethnic Macedonian groups emphasize identity, history and name over economic issues, one diaspora group is breaking the mold, focusing exclusively on issues of economic competitiveness and development for Macedonia. Macedonian diaspora group "MK 2025," led by former Motorola and Nortel Networks executive Mike Zafirovski, signed a memorandum of understanding with USAID on November 14, 2008 to cooperate in strengthening Macedonia,s business competitiveness.

¶9. (SBU) Both ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian diaspora members have returned to take on active roles in Macedonia,s economy. The most common form of diaspora investment is the purchase of small or medium sized enterprises, often together with family members of the diaspora member,s home "community" in Macedonia. These investments tend to be smaller, less than one million USD as an initial investment. Post expects that this type of diaspora involvement will continue.

#### Engagement of Macedonian Leadership with the Groups

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¶10. (SBU) There is regular interaction between diaspora groups and the GoM, including visits and high-level meetings between ethnic Macedonian diaspora groups and the highest levels of Macedonian political power structures. Recent photos of meetings with the Prime Minister, President, Foreign Minister and other officials cover the UMD webpage, and top-level leaders participated in UMD,s Global Conference. Similarly, ethnic Albanian members of the GoM maintain contacts with the NAAC and other groups. For instance, the most recent visitor from the NAAC expressed a great deal of interest in development projects focused on improving education and refurbishing schools in heavily ethnic-Albanian communities. These contacts typically do not cross ethnic lines, although as mentioned above President Ivanov met with the NAAC leadership in September on the

margins of the UNGA, and proposed that next year he convene a meeting of both ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian diaspora organizations in the United States. It is also noteworthy that two U.S. citizen members of the Macedonian diaspora currently serve in ministerial positions in PM Gruevski's cabinet.

#### Embassy,s Engagement with Diaspora Groups

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¶11. (SBU) The diaspora groups on both sides of the ethnic divide have shown enthusiasm for engagement with the Embassy, and particularly for meetings and events with the Ambassador. During visits to Macedonia, the various diaspora groups typically make a point of including a meeting at the Embassy in their travel schedules. Similarly, Ambassador Reeker regularly meets with these groups during his consultations in Washington and New York, and takes part in special events. These include his June 2009 speeches to the "First Annual Global Conference" of the UMD in which he encouraged UMD to focus its energy on pragmatic measures to help the whole country (he has been invited to attend the Second Annual Global Conference in Toronto in June 2010; his attendance of the 13th Annual Awards Gala of the NAAC in New York on September 25; and his planned January 2010 meeting with the Macedonian-American Friendship Association in Columbus.

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